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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 002526

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PTER SNAR CO OAS

SUBJECT: A CLOSER LOOK AT DEMOBILIZED AUC DEATHS

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons

1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

1. (C) Thirty-two out of 3,784 demobilized paramilitaries have been killed since the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) began demobilizing in 2004. This figure does not include the nineteen members of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc (BCN) killed in Medellin, whose demobilization was not held to the same monitoring standards as the other demobilizations. According to the OAS verification mission, there is no evidence that the deaths are a result of a concerted effort by guerrillas to systematically kill demobilized paramilitaries. Instead, the majority of deaths appear to have been caused by common crime or personal vendettas. The GOC has established programs, including psychological counseling and information sessions with the police, to inform demobilizing paramilitaries about civilian life and the importance of respecting state authorities. According to the OAS, past peace processes show that an average of one percent of demobilized combatants die violently after demobilization. End Summary.

Roughly One Percent Killed

2. (C) Excluding the BCN and the minor demobilization of the independent self-defense forces of Ortega, 32 out of 3,784 demobilized paramilitaries have been killed since demobilization began in 2004, or just under one percent. Thirteen were from the Catatumbo Bloc, 16 from the Calima Bloc, and three from the Cordoba Bloc. Almost all of the deaths were violent except for two accidents and one illness-related death. For example, in Valle del Cauca Department, where the Calima Bloc demobilized, most of the former paramilitaries have been killed by drug traffickers, apparently to settle old scores. In Norte de Santander, where the Catatumbo Bloc demobilized, seven members were killed in a brawl with private security guards. One former Cordoba Bloc member was murdered after he provided evidence to authorities against one of his former fellow paramilitaries. The Department of Administrative Security (DAS, rough FBI equivalent) provides security for demobilized commanders when they are outside of the concentration zone in Cordoba but not to the rank and file.

3. (C) Nineteen BCN members have been killed. The BCN demobilization was not as closely monitored as subsequent demobilizations. The Medellin Mayor's Office largely took over the reinsertion process, and there have been many complaints that BCN members continue to intimidate and exert control over their communities. For this reason, the unusually large number of BCN deaths cannot be considered as representative of the AUC demobilization process.

OAS Not Overly Concerned

4. (C) The OAS verification mission has investigated the deaths and determined that there is no evidence of a concerted effort by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) or other illegal groups to systematically kill former paramilitaries. OAS verification mission chief Sergio Caramagna told us the vast majority of the deaths were a result of common crime or personal vendettas.

5. (C) Caramagna does not find the deaths surprising, given that former paramilitaries tend to live in poor, dangerous neighborhoods and are accustomed to being the de-facto authorities in many areas. According to Caramagna, in most demobilizations world wide, an average of one percent of ex-combatants are killed after demobilization. In contrast, the armed forces have killed over 1,000 active paramilitaries since the peace process began, which is roughly ten percent of the estimated 20,000 paramilitaries in Colombia. We do not have data on what percentage of paramilitaries are killed each year by guerrillas and other causes, but it is clear that chances of survival are better after demobilization. Caramagna emphasized, however, that the deaths demonstrate the importance of increasing security and social programs in

former AUC areas. He is concerned the GOC does not have the resources to do so.

GOC Taking Steps

16. (U) The GOC is working to inform former paramilitaries about civilian life and convince them to rely on state authorities to settle security problems. During the demobilization and reinsertion process, a psychologist from the Peace Commissioner's Office holds group counseling sessions. Individual counseling is available at the Centers for Reference and Orientation (CRO), where former paramilitaries report periodically to receive reinsertion benefits. The Peace Commissioner's Office also organizes information sessions between former paramilitaries and Community Police. The police instruct the former paramilitaries on the importance of not taking security matters into their own hands.

WOOD